



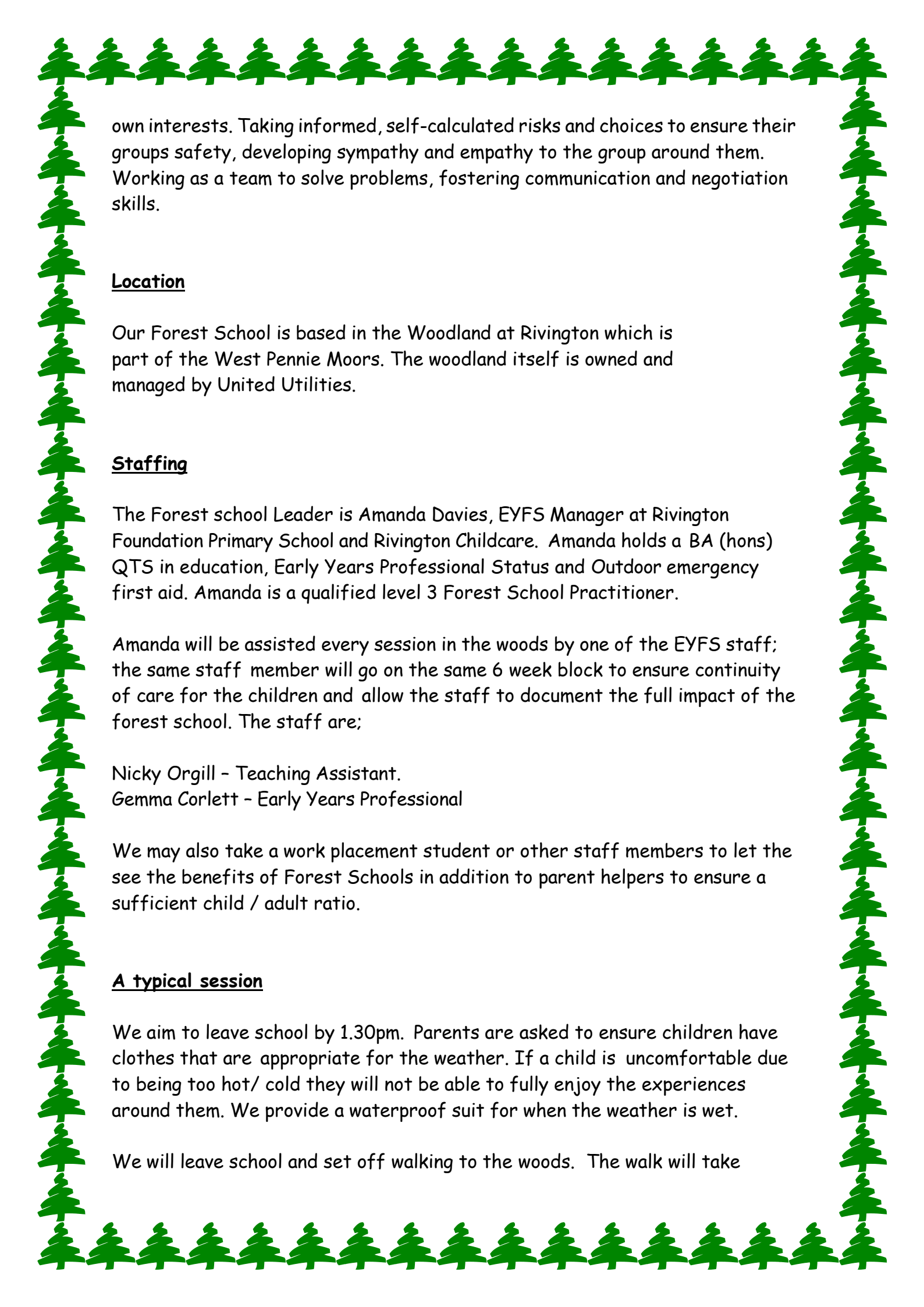
What is Forest School?

The roots of the Forest Schools movement can be traced back as far as the 19th century. These include the ideas of progressive educationalists such as Pestalozzi, Rousseau and Frobel, the woodcraft movements, the Native Americans, and the Quakers. In the UK in 1928 a Forest school was formed in the New Forest. The two founding organisations, 'Woodcraft Movement' and 'Forest School Camps' still exist today. In the 1950's it was developed in Sweden, building independence and self-esteem through hands on play in a woodland setting. The Swedish concept was then further developed by Scandinavia and other European countries and established in Denmark in the 1980's. It was then brought to the UK in the mid 1990's after a visit by Nursery Nurses from Somerset and Early years professionals from other parts of the UK. Denmark has a similar climate to ours and this outdoor approach to learning had a huge impact on the development of children. A 13 month study of Swedish children found the Forest School children far happier to their urban cousins; more balanced with greater social capacity, fewer sick days, more able to concentrate and have better coordination, have higher self-esteem and self-confidence and be able to work as part of a team.

Forest School is holistic learning through play and exploration; children learn about the natural environment, how to handle risks and to use their own initiative to solve problems and cooperate with others. During Forest School children will build a shelter, light a fire and use green woodworking skills to create and build objects from the woodland around them.

They will use full size tools; learn the boundaries of behaviour, both physical and social, establish and grow in confidence, self-esteem and motivation.

Through regular visits to "Rivington Woods", Rivington Primary School will instil a love of the great outdoors. Inspirational, stimulating, hands on experiences will develop self-esteem, confidence and responsibility. The use of the woodland setting, the various real tools and the natural resources will bring learning to life, creating an understanding of the balance of nature and the resources around us. Identifying individual learning schema's to enable the children to learn most effectively and promote success. Planning for every child in the early session stages, then letting the children lead the sessions through their



own interests. Taking informed, self-calculated risks and choices to ensure their groups safety, developing sympathy and empathy to the group around them. Working as a team to solve problems, fostering communication and negotiation skills.

Location

Our Forest School is based in the Woodland at Rivington which is part of the West Pennie Moors. The woodland itself is owned and managed by United Utilities.

Staffing

The Forest school Leader is Amanda Davies, EYFS Manager at Rivington Foundation Primary School and Rivington Childcare. Amanda holds a BA (hons) QTS in education, Early Years Professional Status and Outdoor emergency first aid. Amanda is a qualified level 3 Forest School Practitioner.

Amanda will be assisted every session in the woods by one of the EYFS staff; the same staff member will go on the same 6 week block to ensure continuity of care for the children and allow the staff to document the full impact of the forest school. The staff are;

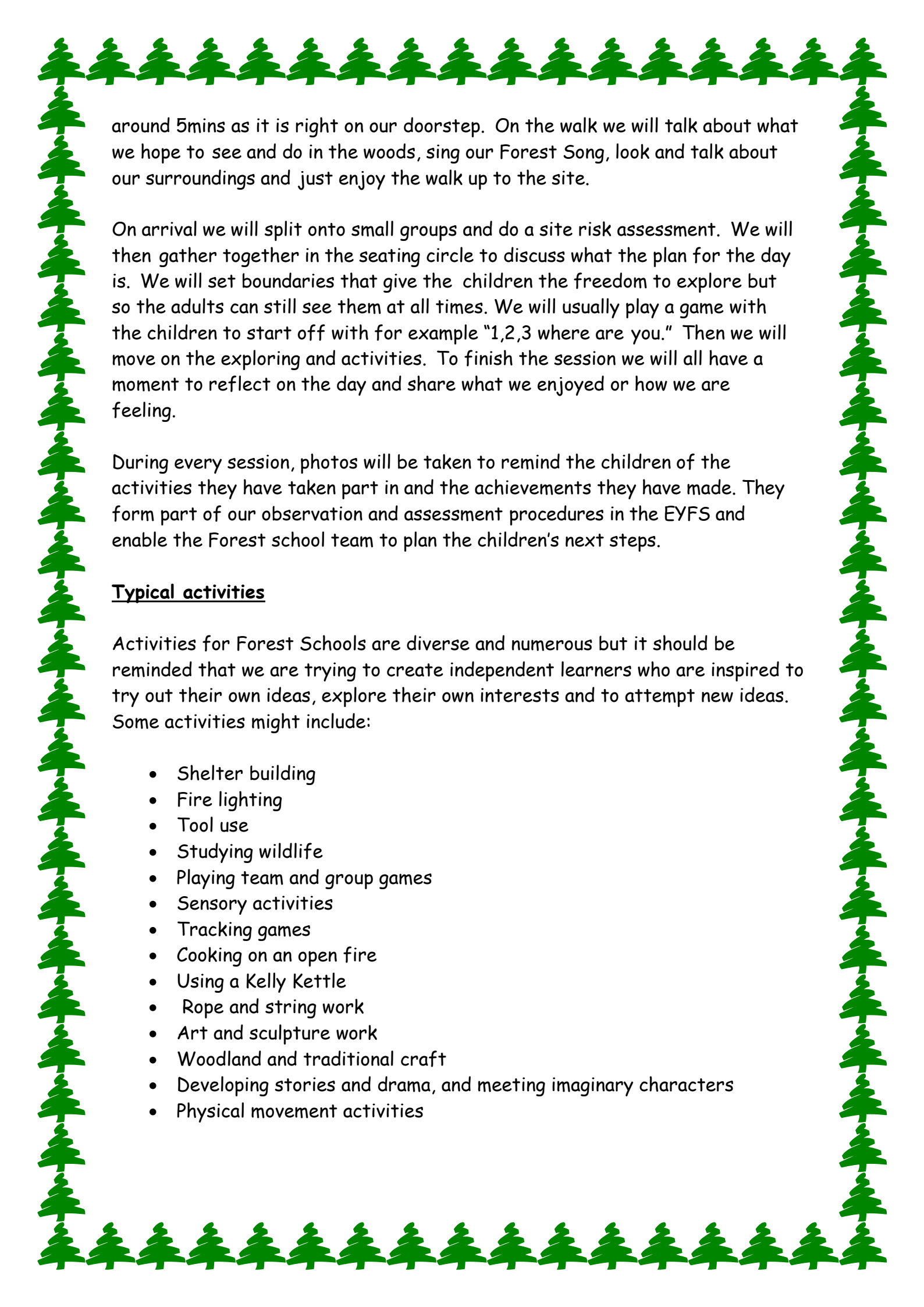
Nicky Orgill - Teaching Assistant.
Gemma Corlett - Early Years Professional

We may also take a work placement student or other staff members to let the see the benefits of Forest Schools in addition to parent helpers to ensure a sufficient child / adult ratio.

A typical session

We aim to leave school by 1.30pm. Parents are asked to ensure children have clothes that are appropriate for the weather. If a child is uncomfortable due to being too hot/ cold they will not be able to fully enjoy the experiences around them. We provide a waterproof suit for when the weather is wet.

We will leave school and set off walking to the woods. The walk will take



around 5mins as it is right on our doorstep. On the walk we will talk about what we hope to see and do in the woods, sing our Forest Song, look and talk about our surroundings and just enjoy the walk up to the site.

On arrival we will split onto small groups and do a site risk assessment. We will then gather together in the seating circle to discuss what the plan for the day is. We will set boundaries that give the children the freedom to explore but so the adults can still see them at all times. We will usually play a game with the children to start off with for example "1,2,3 where are you." Then we will move on the exploring and activities. To finish the session we will all have a moment to reflect on the day and share what we enjoyed or how we are feeling.

During every session, photos will be taken to remind the children of the activities they have taken part in and the achievements they have made. They form part of our observation and assessment procedures in the EYFS and enable the Forest school team to plan the children's next steps.

Typical activities

Activities for Forest Schools are diverse and numerous but it should be reminded that we are trying to create independent learners who are inspired to try out their own ideas, explore their own interests and to attempt new ideas. Some activities might include:

- Shelter building
- Fire lighting
- Tool use
- Studying wildlife
- Playing team and group games
- Sensory activities
- Tracking games
- Cooking on an open fire
- Using a Kelly Kettle
- Rope and string work
- Art and sculpture work
- Woodland and traditional craft
- Developing stories and drama, and meeting imaginary characters
- Physical movement activities

Photographs of some recent sessions...

